



LEGISLATIVE COLUMN

By PAUL FOGLEMAN, PUBLISHER

The North Carolina hosiery industry's involvement with legislative lobbying has assured the future of the Hosiery Technology Center. Since 1992, the annual trek to the halls of the Legislature has resulted in state appropriations for the center which now enjoys a national reputation.

Competing for the attention and support of legislators has been a challenge. Today, over 600 registered lobbyists are entitled to walk the halls of the North Carolina General Assembly. State law requires that people calling on legislators other than their representatives be registered. Their expenses have to be reported semi-annually.

In Washington, there are 25,000 registered lobbyists calling on the 534 members of the House and Senate. The Washington lobbying industry involves hundreds of millions of dollars. Walmart alone reportedly spends \$6 million annually for its team of national lobbyists.

In 1968, there were 100 registered lobbyists in Washington.

State Sen. Virginia Foxx will carry the Republican banner in the November 5th Congressional District race. Sen. Foxx, an indefatigable campaigner, defeated primary opponent Vernon Robinson in a bitter race that featured charges of lies, liberalism, and homosexual marriage support.

Sen. Foxx will face Dr. James Harrell Jr., Democrat, in November. Dr. Harrell is a respected Mt. Airy dentist who has served three terms on the Surry County Board of Commissioners. He is a past president of the UNC-Chapel Hill Alumni Association.

The voter registration in the 5th District favors Republicans.

State Rep. Patrick McHenry won the 10th Congressional District primary by 83 votes, besting the efforts of veteran sheriff David Huffman. This also was a race that turned off many voters with charges of corruption and tactics "that crossed the line." At presstime, Huffman was calling for a recount.

Although Democrat Ms. Anne Fischer of Morganton will face McHenry in the fall, the district is overwhelmingly dominated by Republicans.

Both McHenry and Foxx have endorsed hosiery industry legislative agenda. Dr. Harrell, father of N.C. Rep. James Harrell III, also has responded to Hosiery Governmental Affairs Council surveys and endorsed industry objectives.

Another N.C. House veteran will not return to the General Assembly in 2005. Rep. Bobby Barbee of Stanley County lost his primary runoff fight in August. At least one-third of

House seats will be filled by newcomers. This will add to the drama when the House leadership is determined in January.

The co-speaker arrangement with Reps. Jim Black (D) and Richard Morgan (R) at the helm worked well during the last biennium. Some veteran observers believe that one party would have to have at least 70 of the 120 members.

Polls continue to show Democrat Erskine Bowles with a strong lead over Richard Burr, Republican, in the race for the U.S. Senate seat vacated by John Edwards. Bowles is one of few candidates to discuss new directions for trade agreements, calling for impact studies to be completed and analyzed to measure the impact on American manufacturing.

Hosiery executives who visited U.S. Rep. Burr in his Washington office two years ago are surprised by his advertisements touting his support for curbs on trade agreements.

During the visit he bluntly told the Carolina hosiery delegation he is committed to the free trade agreements and the fast track negotiating authority given to President Bush.



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